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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT : Review of Comments of Chiefs of Station
Seminar Students on Improving the Image
of CIA

1. This memorandum contains a recommendation for your approval; this recommendation is contained in paragraph six.
2. As might be expected, subject comments represent a complete spectrum of opinions. Some officers contend that our image actually is not damaged; others say no matter what the damage we must grin and bear it; and still others are concerned that there has been real damage to our image, particularly on the college campus, ". . . when we can no longer get the really good men, we are in trouble."
3. Depending on how each officer viewed the threat to our image, he recommended either a low-key defensive effort, or a massive public relations exercise. One officer believes improving the quality of our operations will appease Congress, the White House, and the press,

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and that the quality of operations is simply another way of saying quality of our personnel. Some officers were quite negative about public relations gimmicks while another officer recommended a complete public relations package which would include a TV show similar to the FBI story.

4. Several officers emphasized the need for dialogue with important educators and opinion makers. One officer recommended that we enlist the services of key government officials to present our case. ". . . No solution of the problem can be hoped for as long as the Agency pursues a purely no comment attitude."

5. In sum, the comments seem to be divided between those who recommended that we be more open and reveal as much as we can of our activity and those who recommended we pull in our belts and show no reaction whatsoever.

6. It seems to me there are some basic steps we might take to better deal with the image problem and therefore recommend the following programs:

a. Establishment of a permanent committee representing major Agency components and supported by a small working secretariat to concern itself solely with Agency image.

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b. In conjunction with the formulation of the committee, a quiet and deliberate elicitation of the views of select outstanding U. S. citizens in education, the information media, government and business be initiated; the question should be: How best to explain the role of an intelligence agency within a democracy?

c. A program of education within the Agency to distinguish what is secret and what is not, to inform our personnel of actions being taken to improve the image, and to clarify the role of the individual employee in this process.

R. L. Bannerman
Deputy Director
for Support

The recommendation contained in paragraph 6 is approved.

Richard Helms
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

Date

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